*Note video of news conference can be seen at MortoncountySD facebook page

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STATE OFFICIALS ENHANCE LAW ENFORCEMENT PRESENCE AS PRECAUTIONARY MEASURE

~ North Dakota National Guard Personnel to Support Law Enforcement Effort ~

BISMARCK, N.D. – Gov. Jack Dalrymple, North Dakota Highway Patrol (NDHP) Col. Mike Gerhart, Maj. Gen. Al Dohrmann and Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier today held a news conference to discuss an enhanced law enforcement presence for the weekend as a precautionary measure to ensure the safety of the public and those protesting the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline south of Mandan. Officials outlined plans currently underway for providing additional officers in the Bismarck-Mandan area and enhanced patrols in Morton County.

Dalrymple discussed his plans to call on a small number of North Dakota National Guard personnel to support law enforcement and augment public safety efforts. The Guard members will serve in administrative capacities and assist in providing security at traffic information points. The Governor also placed additional Guardsmen on standby alert in the event they are needed to assist with response efforts.

"Because of the increased and prolonged need for law enforcement resources, I have asked General Dohrmann to make available some North Dakota National Guard personnel to support law enforcement and augment their public safety efforts," said Dalrymple. "By helping in these support roles, we can free up more officers for enhanced patrols and calls for assistance. The Guard members will provide valuable personnel, resources and equipment necessary to support local, tribal and state officials."

Beginning today, the traffic control point on 1806 will be converted to a traffic information point, advising motorists of potential hazards, but not requiring motorists to detour. The assistance provided will allow law enforcement

officers the ability to adequately respond to calls for service, while at the same time, increasing their level of traffic patrols south of Mandan.

“Several citizens have voiced their concerns regarding the level of service available to them and this action will provide additional resources to the traffic information point freeing up officers to address those concerns,” said Gerhart.

“When called upon by the Governor, we are prepared to assist law enforcement officers as needed,” said Dohrmann.

“I appreciate the action taken by the Governor,” said Kirchmeier. “It will provide additional resources to our law enforcement in the area. Our officers are doing a great job out there responding to numerous incidents, and our focus remains on protecting the citizens of Morton County, ensuring traffic safety and protecting the rights of the protestors.”

During the news conference, Dalrymple thanked Gerhart, Kirchmeier, Dohrmann, the NDHP, Morton County Sheriff’s Department and all of the sheriffs, deputies, police chiefs and law enforcement professionals from communities and counties across the state for their outstanding work in responding to increased activity and for their dedication to public safety.

Dalrymple also called on everyone who demonstrates against the Dakota Access Pipeline project to do so in a respectful and lawful way.

“Public safety has always been and continues to be paramount,” said Dalrymple. “We are also committed to protecting the Constitutional rights of those who want to assemble peacefully and lawfully. At the same time we must make sure that peace is maintained this weekend.”

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